Eight Days With the Confederates, and Capture of T

Archives, Flags, etc

By

Morris C. Runyan

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EIGHT DAYS WITH THE CONFEDERATES

AND

CAPTURE OF THEIR ARCHIVES, FLAGS, &c.

BY

Company "G" Ninth New Jersey Vol.

WRITTEN BY

CAPTAIN MORRIS C. RUNYAN

PRINCETON, N. J.
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[The author takes pleasure in publishing—with his kind permission—the following letter from Brig. Gen. James Stewart, Jr., and inserts it as an appropriate introduction to the following narrative.]

Philadelphia, May 17th, 1896.

MORRIS C. RUNYAN,

Trenton, N. J.

MY DEAR COMRADE :—

If my opinion is worth anything to you (and you have flattered me by asking for it), I would say, Yes; write the Article. It will, no doubt, make a short but interesting chapter in War History. As to what it was that led up to this detail of yours, I am not clear. I recall to mind that I was sent with my command (after Johnston's capitulation) from Raleigh, where our army lay, to Greensboro, that my orders were to proceed to Greensboro, N. C., where most of Johnston's army lay at the time, take possession of the place and establish a provost guard through the town for the protection of citizens and property. That we took with us, as the first instalment, many thousands of rations for distribution to Johnston's hungry soldiers. That while *en route* to Greensboro, at almost every station we stopped at, we found the citizens terror-stricken over the outrages perpetrated by deserting rebels; that I left guards of men at several points on the line to protect the people. That our regiment (the Ninth New Jersey Volunteers) was the first body of Union soldiers in Greensboro. That the Third Division of the Twenty-Third Army Corps followed us and, after their arrival, I received orders to detail two companies for special service; that the duty was important, and that I should select officers of experience and judgment to command the men. As you had served on my staff in front of Petersburg in '64; in fact, had served in the same command with myself for nearly four years, I thought you possessed the necessary qualifications,

hence you were named for the duty. I did not know at the time what was the exact service expected of you, but from what I heard, I supposed it was to take possession of the Government property at Charlotte, or what was left of it. It was believed that considerable property from Norfolk Navy Yard and Charleston had been shipped to that point while the war was in progress; and this, together with the machinery of the Mint, it was desirable we should protect. No one, I feel sure, from the Department Commander down, had any idea that you would make such a "rich strike" as you did when you discovered the Archives and Records of the late Confederate Government. These were of far more importance to our Government than the Mint and Navy Yard machinery, which was one of the important objects of your expedition. It is true your possession of this valuable property was of short duration, but that cannot rob you of the credit of having discovered it, guarded it, and finally turned it over to your successor.

At this late day we can see where we fell short of doing what we should have done in the matter of preserving data and memoranda when duties were imposed upon us similar to this in which you were engaged. Our officers were young, ardent in the cause, executed their orders with fidelity, but never gave a thought to the historian of the future, or had any idea that they were helping to make history, the details of which must be furnished by the actors in their part of War's drama. As a result, many events worthy of being kept alive have never been recorded, and to attempt to resuscitate them at this late day, depending entirely upon memory as the guide, would result in many inaccuracies and weaken the force of the facts as recalled. In preparing the article you propose, you have, it so happens, sufficient data to make a correct and interesting story, one well worth recording and preserving.

Cordially yours,

JAMES STEWART, JR.

Eight Days With the Confederates

I.

THE FLEEING GOVERNMENT.

THERE are periods in the world's history when great events occur, and some of the most noted of them have occurred quietly, without the flourish of trumpet or the acclamation of mankind.

Christianity quietly established its peaceful and gentle sway over the hearts of men; printing, the invention of an humble individual, slowly, silently and gradually absorbed the attention of mankind. But in the great struggle for emancipation, for freedom of thought, we are hampered in the effort by false theories of the past, which cling like barnacles to our civilization, and every advance towards political freedom has been made amid the clash of arms and the smoke of battle.

Our Civil War, though costly in pecuniary treasure and lives of men, was one of those bright epochs in history that marked the falling away of narrow, false principles and the adoption of broader views of individual liberty The grand outcome of this war must ever be regarded as the striking off the fetters from over five million slaves, and human slavery amongst us thereby receiving its death blow for all time. Lincoln, the great central figure of the war, was a bright object lesson to the world, in that it taught that greatness was not alone confined to lineage, nor knowledge and statesman-

ship to college graduates or university gownsmen, but like the dew and rain, that knows no favorite in the vegetable kingdom, so in the realm of mind its gifts are not confined to class or family, but the humblest may be endowed the greatest. Emerging from the smoke of this great conflict, our country took a long stride forward into a freer and purer national life, and the minds of its citizens were forever cleared of some of the musty errors of the past. In a war of such great magnitude, in numbers of combatants, in casualities, in cost, and of such far-reaching results, all its historical data and incidents must always be of thrilling interest to the student of history.

I have often been solicited to write an account of the capture of the Confederate archives, flags, etc. Heretofore a feeling of my inability to do justice to the subject has kept me silent; but now realizing its historical importance and also the credit due the veteran soldiers of my command in their faithful work in connection therewith, I have become induced to lay aside any such feeling, and in the following narrative I will give an account of their capture, and describe some of the closing scenes in the life of that huge conspiracy "The Southern Confederacy," which, after over four years of the most wonderful activity and resistance was, at the time I write about, fast crumbling away into impotency.

The fall of Richmond and the capture of Lee's army together with the surrender of Johnston's army, compelled the Confederate Government to become a fugitive, here to-day and there to-morrow. Before the evacuation of their capital, ample time was given the government officials to box and remove on cars all the records, archives, specie, etc. belonging to the same, and on the fifth day of April, 1865, we hear from it at Danville, Va.,

through, I believe, the last Proclamation of its official head, President Davis. After that date misfortunes thick and fast befel this ill-starred government. The surrender of Lee on the seventh warned it to move southward toward its supporters, and before time was given to locate in safety behind Johnston lines, his compulsory surrender also occurred (April 26th, 1865). Then an effort to reach the Trans-Mississippi Department was frustrated by the many interruptions in railroad travel on account of torn-up tracks and burned bridges, necessitating the abandonment of the bulky matter of the governmental train. So, at the time of the surrender of the Confederate Armies by General Johnston to General Sherman, near Raleigh, N. C., President Davis, with the government machinery had reached the borders of South Carolina, with the main body of Johnston's surrendered army at Greensboro. Such was the general situation when, directly after the surrender, the Second Brigade Third Division of the 23rd Army Corps, then stationed at Raleigh, was ordered to Greensboro to receive and guard the cannon and ordnance stores of Johnston's army, parked and stored at that place.

II.

ORDERS.

THE Ninth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, Col. James Stewart, Jr. commanding, arrived at Greensboro early on the morning of the 4th of May. We found there large quantities of ordnance and ordnance stores; among the former several hundred cannon (field artillery) parked in regular military order, and it was with most ardent feelings of satisfaction that we looked on these engines of death that had so often sent consternation and wrought death in our ranks on scores of battle-fields—now silent and harmless. After marches to various points in the town, we found ourselves at dusk on a side hill, still in doubt as to our camping for the night. Officers and men were in ill-humor, but about 9 p.m. an order was received to go into camp, and a short time thereafter the command was enjoying a soldier's rest under their shelter tents. My slumber was disturbed a short time afterwards by an orderly with the request for me to report to the Colonel. Upon presenting myself, he informed me he had received an order to send two companies and have them at the Greensboro Depot at daylight next morning. The officer to command them was to report to Corps Headquarters at once; and he said that he had selected Companies "G" and "I" for the duty, that he did not know the destination or object of our march but he was sure it was important, and that I should consider myself especially favored to be placed

in command. After giving the neeessary orders to my eommand, I started for Corps Headquarters and reported there at 11.30 p.m. Here I was told my eommand was to be sent about ninety miles down the railroad, the objective point being Charlotte, N. C.; that our duties would be to reeeive, take eharge of, and guard any and all ordnanee and ordnanee stores found or turned over to us on our line of march; that a loeomotive would be plaeed in my eharge, but that we might not ride very far on aeeount of burned bridges; that I must eaution my men to be silent and watchful and not to eonverse or mingle with the rebel soldiers, and to leave a foree at Salisbury sufficient to earry out the above orders, and that in all matters that might arise I must be governed by circumstanees, using my best judgment in the premises.

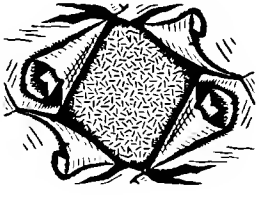
Acting in accordanee with the above orders, my command arrived at the Greensboro Depot next morning and found a loeomotive and box ears suffieient for our use in eharge of an engineer and fireman awaiting my orders. And now a few lines as to the *personnel* of my eommand. The first lieutenant was Geo. L. Bryant, a grand speeimen of physieal manhood, over six feet in height, twenty-four years old, brave, eautious, intelligent and experienced. The seeond lieutenant was Geo. Peters, in middle life, lately returned to the eompany after suffering nearly a year in various prisons of the South—not strong physically, but cool, colleeted and brave, with excellent judgment. My sergeants and eorporals could not be excelled in bravery and reliability They had often been tried and could be relied upon under all eireumstances. As Company "I" Lieutenant David Kille was with me but a few hours, I will only say when he was left at Salisbury I felt eonfident the

honor of our regiment would be properly maintained by this veteran officer and the men under him, and I was not mistaken. My command being thoroughly disciplined and under such officers, I felt we ought to do credit to ourselves and not disappoint the General who relied on us. But when I reflected, as we moved out of the depot and towards our destination of the words of caution made to me at Corps Headquarters that a brawl between my men and the Confederates, one-fifth of whom were armed, might mean the defeat of the objects of the expedition and loss of life ; and when I thought of the possibility of meeting an enemy as we journeyed South who might not have heard of the surrender, or who would disregard the same, I was greatly impressed with the delicacy of our position. In the midst of such reflections our train suddenly came to a halt, and the engineer informed me he was out of wood. This matter was soon remedied by an appropriation of fence rails near at hand. This occurred so often before we left the train that it came to be decidedly monotonous, to state it mildly.

Our train slowly wended its way, giving us ample opportunity to see the beautiful scenery constantly opening to our view—the gentle hills, lovely valleys, trees and shrubbery decked in their loveliest Spring attire, rivulets sparkling in the sunshine, farm houses enveloped in a luxury of shade,—reminding us of our homes and loved ones, and that our dreams of months and years would soon be realized, the war being about over, and we would be enjoying like scenes unrestrained by military discipline.

During one of these stops for wood, we met a unique character in the person of a dwarf, slightly over three feet high. We induced him to take a short ride with us.

He lived, we found, with the noted "Siamese Twins," and had travelled with them in connection with their show enterprises before the war. They owned a large plantation near the railroad and had many slaves. He said the Confederacy was dead and that he would not put on mourning at its funeral. Altogether he was a shrewd, queer personage.



III.

ARRIVAL AT SALISBURY.

AS we neared the town of Salisbury we came up with a division of Johnston's army moving South. We could hardly realize that these men, moving in broken, straggling groups and masses, all order and discipline abandoned, with sullen, downcast looks, ragged, dirty and footsore, with spirits broken, were the same soldiers who, with splendid discipline, had fought so bravely and gallantly on many hard contested battle-fields, and who, following the flag of their now "lost cause," had performed deeds of daring and heroism only paralleled by the men that wore the blue.

Shortly after crossing the historic Yadkin River, our train pulled up at the station in Salisbury at 11 a.m., having accomplished fifty miles in five hours. Upon alighting from the cars, we were immediately surrounded by a motley crowd—Confederate officers, soldiers, citizens and negroes, who followed us as we marched a short distance to an open spot, where we halted and made a temporary camp. Our appearance to them must have seemed strange and unique. We were less than two hundred Union soldiers, but fully armed and equipped, not prisoners of war marching to their prison pen, the distant walls of which could be seen from where we stood, and where so many of our boys had suffered such cruel treatment. With undaunted mien we appeared among them as masters of the situation although

they outnumbered us one hundred to one. Truly their unrighteous rebellion had brought them bitter fruit,—the loss of everything except individual honor. Leaving Lieutenant Bryant in command, Licutenant Kille and myself started out to learn something of our surroundings. The first party met was a group of Confederate officers with one of their generals. He expressed surprise at the daring of sending so small a force so far away among those who were such bitter foes only a few hours before. I replied "Their people should feel flattered as our general, no doubt, relied upon their well-known high sense of honor." He said: "We could rely upon their officers and most of their soldiers in not obstructing us in the object of our march, but that the officers had lost all control and command of their men." If we had reached town two hours earlier, we could have witnessed a proof of this. There had been a fierce fight on one of the main streets between men of his own division. Having some old grudge to settle, they met, while raiding a store-house, and several lives were lost before it ended. They asked very many questions as to what we thought would be done in reference to the slaves. They had not fully realized what the "Emancipation Proclamation" meant. They asked also as to whether they would be pardoned, whether the government would confiscate their lands, etc. The rebellion had at last reached a point where the interests at stake had a very pressing personal application; and these problems, that the future alone could answer, were a grave source of trouble to them. Numbers of them said they would sacrifice all their material interest and leave the country the first opportunity. All seemed agreed that the last honorable stand had been made, and that to prolong the contest would be unwise and cruel. They believed that General

Kirby Smith would, upon learning of Johnston's surrender, follow his example and surrender the Trans-Mississippi Department and thus fully close the long struggle.

I accepted an invitation to dine with a citizen, who informed me that deep down in the very depths of his heart he had always been "for the Union." What a wonderful influence success has on the human mind. I have no doubt if the Union arms had not prevailed, my host would never have discovered that deep-seated love for the old flag, and that his many and various acts in aid of rebellion would have been sufficient to have made him a bright and shining patriot in the new-born Confederacy.

After securing quarters and arranging for the stationing of guards so far as the limited number of my command would admit, I left Company "I" with Lieutenant David Kille in command at this place (Salisbury), and with my own company once more boarded the cars, leaving Salisbury about 5 p.m., expecting to reach Charlotte some time during the night. A run of about five miles however, brought us to an obstruction, a bridge spanning a deep creek having been burned by our cavalry in a raid through this section a short time before, compelling us to vacate the cars and improvise a crossing, and from this point on we were severed from all communication with our troops above, the telegraph poles and wires being destroyed for several miles. On the banks of this stream we put up our shelter tents and encamped for the night, with numbers of rebel stragglers near us. Our situation seemed odd, feeling as we did, that no unseen armed foe was in our front. Strange that it had come to pass when the word "Front" had lost its thrilling significance, and that the sight of the

"Johnnies" that formerly excited such peculiar and keen an interest, conld be seen all about us without exciting more than ordinary concern.

The next morning, on our march to Concord, a small town near the railroad, we encountered large numbers of Confederate soldiers, some lying by the wayside too sick and weak, by reason of disease or want of food, to travel; some shoeless, and all ragged and dirty. Stories were told us by them too shocking for belief, of raids on dwellings and farmhouses, assault, arson, and even murder was said to have been committed. When we reflect that among all soldiers there is generally a small percentage of the lawless element that only severe military restraint can control, with local government paralyzed, it is not strange to account for this lawlessness and that this element should have banded together in acts of violence. When we consider how these men were situated, some five hundred miles from home, with a prospect of walking this long journey, with spirits broken, their money worthless, and gaunt hunger facing them. All the surroundings and influences had a strong bearing to bring out the evil in their natures. The spirit of lawlessness here found was the natural outcome of dreadful, cruel, desolating battle-fields, stripped of all the glamor and tinsel of glorious war.

IV

DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME.

AT Concord we had our first and only trouble with the rebel soldiers. There we encountered a large number of these stragglers, perhaps two thousand. Halting my command on elevated ground near the station, and learning that telegraphic communication was to be had with Charlotte, I sent a message directing cars to be sent to transport my command. Receiving a favorable reply, I had our arms stacked and guards placed, with orders to be within a moment's call, and particular caution not to fraternize in any manner with the Confederates. Then I ordered a rest. Some time afterwards my orderly reported that some of the men had liquor, bought of the rebels, that he had been told that at the village of Concord, a short distance from the station, they were raiding a storehouse where the liquor came from, also that one of our men had disregarded orders and was associating and drinking with the Confederates, and acting in a drunken and boisterous manner. The command was thereupon immediately ordered in line, and all spirits found on any man was destroyed and a corporal and guard was sent to arrest and punish the drunken soldier. The reader of this can be assured that my officers and most of my men were thoroughly aroused to the perplexities, not to say dangers of the situation. Large numbers of the Confederates were surrounding us, many being armed and

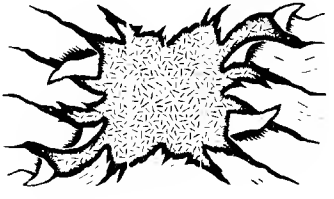
drunk, and all desperate. I am glad to record, however, that only a small number of my men had disobeyed orders, and only two seriously. These were afterwards tried by general court martial on very serious charges, found guilty, and sentenced to undergo severe punishment.

About this time I received word that the engine bringing cars for us had broken down near Charlotte. I was just on the point of giving orders to resume our march when I was approached by a party of Confederates. They inquired if I commanded the Federal troops. I answered that I did. Through their spokesman they then said that they had been appointed a committee, with the approval of some of my own men, to inform me that the man undergoing punishment must be released. I took my watch from my pocket, told them the man had just stood fifteen minutes, that three-quarters of an hour longer would finish their punishment as had been ordered, that double guards would be placed around him, and if they had any regard for their fellow-soldiers, they had better warn them to keep away, for the guards would have orders to shoot anyone in their tracks that came within ten paces of them, and as to him (the spokesman) personally, my pistol would do the answering if he failed to get a respectable distance from me in just one half minute. He looked at me for a moment in amazement; I rather think my answer was unexpected. Without a word in reply he quickly turned, and as he left, his pace quickened and in an incredibly short time he disappeared among his fellows. I felt that to have abated one minute from the time ordered for the man's punishment would have been accepted by the Confederates as a weakening on our part through fear of them. So the three-quarters of an hour

passed with closed ranks, everyone being watchful and alert, with anxious thoughts, but ready for any emergency. If we had given way in the least to their first demands, defeat of our expedition and loss of life would probably have followed. We stood in readiness until the full time had expired, when the man was released, and we again took up the line of march southward, and made the distance of eight miles with only one or two short halts. My object in making such a long march without rest was to sober any that had indulged too freely in drink, and I am sure this result was reached, for when the command filed to the left of the railroad and came to a halt (about 8 p.m.) and stacked arms, and the order was given to sleep by their arms, it was found that all were asleep in less than five minutes, except the few men detailed as guards, too tired and exhausted to make coffee that night.

In reviewing the events of the day, I thought more than once that a mistake had been made in not sending a larger force. If the train had come to Concord as promised, I am sure I should have had additional trouble. The Confederates would have attempted its capture, and that would have brought on a conflict, so I was thankful for the derailment. My anxiety prevented me from sleeping this night, something unusual for me. In all my experience, my present surroundings seemed to me the most perplexing. I decided that it would be good policy to make a *coup d'etat* on Charlotte, as the smallness of my command might invite attack. Hence we established ourselves there, with as few seeing us as possible. The next morning, before resuming our march, I had a plain talk with the men of my company, explaining to them the delicacy of our situation, appealing to them to uphold the honor of the company and

regiment, referring to the trouble of the day before as being caused entirely by drinking, and requesting them to entirely abstain from drinking while in Charlotte. I asked them individually, also, to frown down and report anyone that shonld so indulge. I am happy to say that all my requests in this regard were carried out to the letter, and no body of men did better, more intelligent, or harder work than the men of my command during the next six days.



V

ARRIVAL AT CHARLOTTE.

WE were now thirteen miles from Charlotte, and, as I proposed reaching there about dark, I delayed moving until 9 a.m., when we resumed our march, making frequent halts. We met many individuals, whose first query was: "Are these all the soldiers you have?" I became tired answering in the affirmative, and told them we were the advance guard, four thousand were just behind us. There was one exception, an aged, white-haired slave who, upon seeing us, in excessive joy declared "he had been praying and praying for dis 'ere sight, an' now he se'ed with his own eyes Massa Lincoln's soldiers, glory hallaluyah, now I'se ready to die." He seemed to be in a perfect ecstacy of joy, and as we passed out of his view I could hear him pouring forth exclamations as above quoted. It was a satisfaction and pleasure to feel that the class represented by this poor old fellow were happier for our coming. When about three miles from Charlotte, we met a gentleman who introduced himself as Mr. T———. He had come out for the express purpose of meeting us, said he had always opposed the Confederate government, and had suffered for his sentiments so far as to have had some of his buildings burned. He gave me a full and accurate description of the town, and advised me to quarter my troops in the college buildings, at that time the chief medical establishment of the Confederacy; he said by a

circuitous route I could reach the place without many persons seeing us, and he offered to act as a guide. By a rapid march under his direction, we reached the buildings at 6 p.m. without having been seen on any of the streets of the city. These college buildings being located in the suburbs of the town, with a high enclosure around, the ground was splendidly adapted for our purpose. We found two cannon, one of them a 12lb brass Napoleon. I immediately had it placed at the main entrance, with a guard over it. My plans had completely succeeded, and before the medical officer, who resided with his family in the first building from the college, was aware of our presence. When he came to look after his property he found himself challenged, to his astonishment, by a Yankee soldier. About 7 p.m., in company with Lieutenant Bryant, I started out in quest of information. In passing along the principal street towards the centre of the city we met many people, among them a few ladies, who manifested their displeasure by tossing their pretty heads and drawing their skirts close on one side, thereby giving us ample room to pass them. In my heart I forgave their rudeness, feeling that when they came to know us better they would treat us more kindly, as many other Southern ladies had done before. We also met the editor of the local paper. He said his paper had not been published for some weeks, but if I had orders for the regulation of the city he would publish an edition the next day. I told him I would have orders prepared, which orders were published as promised, and I think they had an excellent effect on the public mind. Having decided to establish my headquarters the next day in the centre of the city, I selected a building near the Commissary Depot as best adapted for the purpose. The greater

part of the night was passed in preparing orders for the government of the place, and arranging my small force in shape to enforce the same. With this end in view I made the following disposition of my company of about ninety-six (officers and men), with the exception of guards stationed over places that imperatively demanded protection—as headquarters, commissary stores, powder magazine, naval stores, medical stores and the mint. After placing guards for the protection of the above-named places, I divided all the remainder of my command in three reliefs, each relief being required to be moving constantly in some of the streets of the city, and near where the stores were located, for the period of four hours, at the expiration of which time the second relief would take up the work in the streets, and if no disturbance occurred, the retiring men would obtain four hours' rest. At the expiration of the next four hours the third relief would take up the guardianship of the city, and the first would be held in readiness as a reserve, with the second at rest. In this manner the city was patrolled night and day during our stay—our tactics being to deceive the Confederate soldiers and people as to our real strength. Our making such a respectable showing on the streets had the effect of discouraging tumultuous gatherings and rioting. Any reflecting person, especially a military man, can correctly judge what fatiguing work these men did for the next five days. Some critics at ease and in safety at their homes might ask: "Why such onerous and exacting orders?" I answer: "The occasion and the success of the expedition demanded, and our own safety required it. We were nearly one hundred miles from reinforcements, isolated from all communication with other troops, and with a large number of rebel soldiers in our midst fully armed,

—Wheeler's noted cavalry that had not been paroled, and who, at any moment, might disregard the terms of Johnston's surrender and present a war-like front, were there." Great praise is due to the officers and men for the excellent judgment displayed in the delicate and exacting duties they were called on to perform, and for the prompt manner in dispersing mobs, intimidating and holding in check the vicious and the would-be raiders, thereby saving for the government the immense stores here found.

VI.

CHARLOTTE AND ITS STORES.

THE City of Charlotte had a population regularly of about five thousand, but during my stay I should think it had, at least, two or three thousand additional, straggling soldiers, etc. It is the seat of Mecklinburg County, borders on South Carolina, and is the centre of the gold-mining district of the Carolinas. Situated on one of the main railroads of the South, its importance during the war was due to its inland situation and safe location as a distributing centre, as the enormous quantities of stores of various kinds then there prove. The value of the medical stores alone, the Confederate surgeon estimated at over one million dollars, besides large amounts of machinery and naval stores, brought from the Portsmouth Navy Yard upon its evacuation. There was also a powder magazine located here. An immense quantity of baled cotton could be seen outside the city limits, having been ordered out of the place a few weeks previous, on account of a threatened attack by General Stoneman's cavalry, cotton being contraband, and when it could not be moved was burned, thus becoming a source of danger to the city.

The next morning (Monday), having established an office in the centre of the city, and recognizing the fact that starving people are apt to lose their reason and are most difficult to control, my first care was to formulate

rules for the relief of this large class whom we would have on our hands. Quite a large quantity of flour, pork, molasses, salt, tobacco, etc. came into our hands, and during our stay we fed, or assisted in feeding, hundreds of people daily, citizens, soldiers, and negroes. They were required to fall in line and take their turn and be questioned. They were then given orders on the Commissary as their necessities seemed in our judgment to require. In accordance with an agreement made the night of my arrival, I met the Confederate Commandant of Post, Col. Wm. I. Hoke, at the Court House, when he formally turned over to me the stores that had been agreed to be surrendered by General Johnston, viz: ordnance and ordnance stores. He proffered in regular form an invoice of the stores, and requested of me a receipt for the same, which I readily gave him, as I was anxious to possess the unique document; however, I informed him I proposed to take entire charge of the city and also all the public stores there found. The following is a copy of the document:—

HEADQUARTERS, CHARLOTTE,

May 8th, 1865.

Invoice of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores turned over by Wm. I. Hoke, Comd'g Post at Charlotte, N. C., to the United States Government under a Convention between Major-General Sherman, commanding U. S. Army in N. C. and General J. E. Johnston, commanding C. S. Army in N. C., on 26th April, 1865. (Then follows a schedule of the stores.)

Signed,

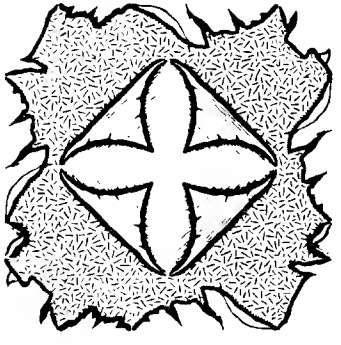
WM. I. HOKE, COL. COMD'G POST.

We met large numbers of the citizens, some proffering suggestions, others soliciting favors or asking decisions in reference to cotton, etc., that would result in their being benefited. I listened respectfully to their statements, and informed the latter class that their cases

would be attended to later. In fact, I gave them to understand that no decisions on matters involving the title to any goods or chattels would be entertained or decided until order and quietness had been thoroughly established in the city. By this decision I rid myself of a troublesome class of applicants. We found the U. S. Mint in charge of a Mr. Gibson, an elderly gentleman. He stated he held his position as custodian by virtue of a Federal appointment, confirmed by the Confederate Government, and that the mint had been closed since March, 1861. He said he had sons occupying high positions in both the Federal and Confederate Armies. The machinery and fixtures, etc. seemed to be in fine condition, but we failed to see any of the finished product lying around loose as is generally the case in institutions of this kind. As he seemed to hold such a strong double title to the office, together with the fact that I failed to see anything movable of value, I immediately decided that, for once, "the right man was in the proper place," and left him in undisputed possession.

I accepted a Mr. B——'s invitation to lunch. He was one of the leading men of the State and president of the Southern Express Company. I found him an extremely entertaining and agreeable gentleman. He told me he had President Davis and a portion of his party as his guests about ten days before. They had made a two days' stop at Charlotte, and had been very warmly received and most generously treated during their stay. They informed my host that at some of the places passed through they had been very indifferently treated, and at one place, where they stopped over night, the President was not invited from his car by any one. Thus, it seems that His Excellency, the President, was already receiving those slights and rebuffs and the falling away

of friends that culminated in the Georgia pine woods two weeks later, with hardly a corporal's guard left of the great army of sycophants who had surrounded him in his days of glory and greatness. He had already begun to taste of the gall and bitterness of his great downfall.



VII.

SURPRISES.

ON Monday night I was informed by a citizen that other stores besides those we had taken charge of were hid somewhere in the city. The particular kind of stores he did not know. They had been left by the President Davis party Also that stores had been sent to a nearby town. He gave me the name of the person they had been sent to. I addressed a letter to the person named, stating he would make himself liable, and would be required to give an account to the U. S. Government if he continued receiving stores of any kind from Charlotte. Following the above stated clue, and supposing I might, perhaps, find additional commissary, ordnance, or medical stores. After considerable questioning of different classes of people, I located a large warehouse which my informant said he thought was full of boxes filled with some kind of stores. As the place was securely locked, we effected a forcible entrance, when, to my utmost astonishment I saw, in an open space near the main door, dozens of Federal colors, regimental, State and Union flags lying in the greatest disorder on the floor. Upon further investigation I found a very large number of boxes in the building. I very correctly came to the conclusion that this capture was of the very greatest importance, and I had ample

guards stationed for its protection and care. Shortly afterwards I was greeted with another surprise, being told that General Joseph E. Johnston was in the city and had the keys of this building in his possession. I immediately addressed him a letter, stating I had taken charge of the building in which these boxes were stored in the name and for the use of the U. S. Government. As I propose to review this particular subject further on. I will, in this place, merely give the facts relating thereto. The next morning (Wednesday), while orders were being given out for provisions, one of the guards on duty detailed to maintain order among the applicants, informed me that, to quote the man's own words: "A little old man, whose name he had forgotten, would not obey orders to fall in line, but insisted on him, the guard, giving me his name." I reminded the man of his orders not to admit anyone without thus complying. He then turned and was about to make his exit, when he called back: "Here is the man." Upon looking up I saw a gentleman in citizen's clothes, with a remarkably striking face. I instantly stepped forward, and he introduced himself as General Johnston. I commenced an apology for the rudeness and incivility of the guard, but he stopped me with the remark: "That man is a good soldier; I have the greatest respect for one that obeys orders." I promptly acquiesced, but said he was astonishingly ignorant of current history, or he would certainly have heard of so distinguished a general. After being seated, he informed me he had called to see me in reference to the subject matter of my letter. He stated the boxes contained all the battle flags that had been captured from the Federal armies during the war, and of still greater importance, all the records and archives of the Confederate Government. He said he

had hoped that they might have fallen into friendly hands. His disappointment was, I thought, very manifest. I was not fully aware of the magnitude of this discovery and capture until he made this statement, thinking up to this time, that we only had the captured flags. I said to him that I appreciated their very great importance, that they should be guarded with the greatest care and vigilance, and, if necessary, I would sacrifice any and everything else for the sake of having these valuable and important records, etc. turned over intact to the officer relieving me. He remained in conversation with me nearly an hour, and upon his retiring I was impressed that he was one of the ablest men it had been my privilege to meet and converse with.

When I thought upon the great importance of these documents, especially to the historian and scholar for their correct understanding of this great conflict, containing the official history on their side of the greatest of rebellions, of this four years of war, without a parallel in the annals of modern times, in its magnitude, and that these priceless papers that told of the beginning and almost the end of this gigantic war, were in the charge and keeping of less than one hundred men, surrounded, as we constantly were, by vast hordes of reckless and desperate men, and far away from assistance, I was compelled to realize most keenly the very great responsibility unexpectedly thrust upon me and this small body of men, and it impelled me to renewed vigilance and care.

On the second day an unexpected source of trouble presented itself. The colored people of the surrounding country, hearing that "Massa Lincoln's" soldiers were in Charlotte, and imagining the year of jubilee had arrived, came flocking into town by hundreds from every

direction, and by Tuesday the city was overrun by hungry, homeless colored men and women, with numerous fresh arrivals each succeeding hour. I was convinced that heroic measures would have to be adopted to overcome this difficulty As we had only a limited supply of provisions, the plan I adopted became imperatively necessary. I had several hundred of them (colored people) brought to an open space in the centre of the city, and had a plain talk with them. As I looked on their upturned, anxious, honest and wishful faces, and felt that they were the truest friends we had with us, my resolution was considerably shaken. But when I thought it would be impossible to maintain them, and that it would be better in the end for all, I told them that the year of jubilee had not quite arrived, but would in a very short time, that we had hardly enough provisions to feed those in want belonging to the city, that for the present, each and every one belonging out of the city must return to their respective abodes, and that if any were found after the expiration of an hour in Charlotte, they would be subject to arrest and punishment. I then asked if they would obey my order, and also tell all they met on their return home of the order. They answered unanimously they would. And they did faithfully comply, and during the balance of my short stay the streets were almost deserted by this friendly class of people.

VIII.

A WOUNDED CONFEDERATE SOLDIER.

AMONG the many cases of assistance rendered by us to the Confederate soldiers, was one case of peculiar interest. It was that of a badly crippled South Carolina artillery officer, only lately from the hospital, and then on his way home—if such a spot was left him—on one of the islands near Charleston. He joined the rebel cause at the beginning, giving the Confederacy the use of a college-trained mind, and leaving behind a beautiful ancestral home, with many hundred acres of rich cotton land and large numbers of slaves. He had participated in many of the great battles of the war, and I have no doubt had done the full measure of a soldier's duty. All his wealth, his strength of body, his vigor of mind had been placed on the altar of the "Lost Cause" and sacrificed, and he was then suffering for want of food, yet withal displaying such fortitude and cheerfulness that I was at once attracted to him, and when I learned he had received his injuries at the "Mine Explosion" the previous 30th of July, I at once decided I would lighten his load of trouble. After satisfying his immediate wants, I told him to remain over night and we would have him placed in better condition. I found him a gentleman, attractive and cheerful, bright in conversation, and by degrees I learned his army history, as above stated. He gave his experience in the terrible mine upheaval, and as I was a participant on the Union side, it was particularly interesting to me. I

would state that the mine explosion, or battle of the Crater, occurred July 30th, 1864, in front of our lines near Petersburg, Va. The project was first inspired by an officer of a Pennsylvania regiment of the Ninth Army Corps, and to his regiment was intrusted all the details and the execution of the same. The *personnel* of the regiment being largely minors, they were peculiarly fitted for the enterprise. Commencing at a favorable point inside our line, they made a tunnel between the lines and when it reached a point under the hill on which the fort was situated, they excavated chambers large enough to contain six tons of powder. The work required several weeks, and was guarded with great secrecy. When all was in readiness, the Ninth Army Corps was assigned the duty of making the demonstration in connection with the explosion. With the Eighteenth Corps in support, at daylight of the 30th of July, the troops being all in their appointed places, the mine was sprung, and with a shock like an earthquake the hill on which the fort was situated arose in the heavens and instantly assumed a pyramidal shape with the apex several hundred feet in the air, wearing the color of a cyclonic cloud on the edge of which could be seen men, cannon, caissons, logs, etc. Many were buried by the descending mass. The finishing touch to this awful picture was the belching forth of fire and iron from the throats of over three hundred cannon, the cannoneers taking their signal from the mine explosion. It was the most terrific and awful demonstration of the power of explosives I had ever witnessed. The particulars of the battle I leave to the historian, with this observation only, that the rank and file felt that, instead of the great loss of life with no results, with proper management a great victory might have

been gained on that memorable day. My friend said that on that eventful morning he had just arisen, and was sitting on the edge of his bunk when, with a shock that rendered him nearly senseless, he felt himself rising together with his surroundings, high in the air. In the short period of the descent he received various injuries, a broken arm being the most severe. He had no idea of the height he reached or the time he was in the air, but as he settled on the ground he became aware that a heavy piece of timber had pinned him down, and that dirt and debris was fast burying him out of sight. At this point it became with him truly a battle for life, and with only one arm he struggled, as only one so frightfully placed could, and when everything became settled, he found he had only his face clear, and with this knowledge he became unconscious. When he regained his senses he found himself surrounded by Union soldiers, many of whom were dead and wounded. In this condition he remained for several hours. The ground being retaken by the Confederates during the afternoon, he was dug out and sent to the hospital with both legs and arm broken and nearer dead than alive. Such was his experience in that terrible explosion and battle. The next day we secured for him a discarded cavalry horse and an old wagon in which we placed provisions and, at his request, a sack of salt, this commodity being scarce in the South at that time, he saying that the salt would make him welcome at any place he should stop on his way, and when he thanked me and said farewell, I felt I had assisted a brave and noble man. Although he had been disloyal to the "Old Flag," his loyalty and sacrifices to a cause he thought right and just, and the suffering he underwent for the same, deserved to make him conspicuous in the galaxy of heroes.

IX.

RELIEVED.

ON Friday, May 12th, Brigadier-General Thomas, with the 1st Brigade 1st Division, arrived, relieving me. The next day I had my command placed on cars, and in due time reported at Headquarters, Greensboro. Thus ended seven days of mental and physical strain unparalleled in my army experience. I cannot speak too highly of the manner in which my lieutenants carried out the spirit as well as the letter of all orders given them, and for their intelligent, prompt decisions when suddenly called to act on a line that orders did not cover. The sergeants and corporals too, catching the spirit of the officers, did splendid work in all the positions to which they were unexpectedly called, and the men, too, I cannot speak of too highly. During the whole time I did not have occasion to reprimand or call anyone to account for any duty neglected or improperly performed. Like a perfect piece of machinery they all worked smoothly and with precision, bringing about the very best results and, when relieved, I felt that no body of men could have mastered the difficulties encountered better than did this small command. Judging our work by its results, we felt gratified and proud. In the midst of chaos, riot and disorder, we had wrought order and safety to person and property and maintained the same until relieved. All the immense

accumulation of valuable stores, as well as the Confederate archives, were turned over intact to the officer relieving me. At General Thomas' request, I remained until the next day. During the afternoon, General Joseph E. Johnston called at headquarters, and I had the pleasure of introducing General Thomas to him. The conversation in a short time turned on the Confederate records, and General Thomas, expressing a desire to see them, the three of us repaired to the building containing them, and there, in the gloom of a partially lighted warehouse, amid the records of the "Lost Cause," we sat in conversation for over an hour, myself the principal listener. Among the events spoken of was the first battle of "Bull's Run," both speaking particularly of the respective parts they had taken in that engagement, General Thomas having acted in a subordinate capacity, while General Johnston, as is well known, decided that noted battle by bringing his columns into the action at a critical period of the engagement. Thus sitting among these silent witnesses of treason against a free and beneficent government and in the company of one of its most distinguished actors, seemed to me to be extremely striking and dramatic. * * * * Pressing aside the curtain of the future and looking therein, I asked, would these silent papers, that had been so carefully prepared, noted and filed, with the expectation that they would bring honor and renown to their authors, be the unwilling instruments of their humiliation and punishment? While here I recalled the words of my distinguished friend: "I hoped that they might have fallen into friendly hands." But our generous and noble government, turning the leaves of that alphabet of love and forgiveness opened by the illustrious Grant at Appomattox, when he sent the Confederate prisoners

home, with horse and baggage, and with the injunction: "Till your soil, start the wheels of industry in your factories and workshops, repair the ravages of the war," and advancing still further in that language of love, by casting aside the examples and precedents of history, and rising on a higher plane, high above those baser and selfish elements of man's nature, that had given expression and direction to former victors in the treatment of their foes, with a magnanimity unparalleled, not only freely forgave them, but restored to them their property, and with a boundless generosity, rehabilitated them with that priceless boon, the royal mantle of citizenship. I have often thought since that memorable epoch, when seeing the name of this distinguished General in connection with the high and honorable office he has since held under our government, whether his wish had not been more than realized, that these records had (although against his wishes at that time), fallen into the most friendly hands.

At 12 noon, May 13th, I had my command placed on cars, and started for Greensboro and, as I have before stated, at the request of General Thomas, I remained over night, he saying he would endeavor to have me appointed Provost-Marshal of Charlotte. I had a knowledge of the situation, he said, so he thought it would be beneficial to the government to have me retained, and he would so represent the matter. It was very satisfactory to me to have an officer of his rank, and in a position of seeing and judging of the work done, endorsing my acts in so emphatic a manner. It would have been extremely gratifying to have remained, yet I felt there would be small chance of such a detail being made as I belonged out of his division, and the next day, receiving an order

by telegraph to report immediately to my regiment, it confirmed my judgment, and upon my arrival at Greensboro, when the following order was placed in my hands; I realized it settled the matter, I confess, very much to my satisfaction. The order read as follows:

HEADQUARTERS, 2ND BRIG., 3RD DIV., 23RD ARMY CORPS,
Greensboro, N. C., May 14th, 1865.

General Orders, No. 30.

Captain Morris C. Runyan, Co. "G" Ninth New Jersey Volunteers is hereby detailed as Acting Assistant Inspector General on the Staff of the General Commanding, and will report for duty without delay.

By command of
BRIGADIER GENERAL SCHOFIELD.

J. N. ROGERS, Capt. and A. A. A. General.

The foregoing personal reference would not have been inserted here had it not been that it was, in its nature, an endorsement of the work done at Charlotte.

X.

CONCLUSION.

IN conclusion I will again state that my orders from Corps Headquarters was to push through the disorganized mass of Confederate soldiers, with the object of saving as much ordnance and ordnance stores as possible, and to protect property and maintain order as far as my limited command would admit. But the main object was to take charge of and guard the ordnance, etc., *written* orders to that effect having been handed me. And it was acting on the verbal instructions to use my best judgment in all things not embraced in orders that caused me to take entire charge on my arrival of the city of Charlotte, judging that would be the only way to save the immense stores there found from being destroyed or carried away by the large numbers of Confederate stragglers there found and others who were passing through the place. By that act was entailed extraordinary labor on every member of my command, each officer and man doing three men's duty in the emergency. If my small command had contented itself with carrying out the written instructions, and had collected the ordnance, etc., and had had them stored and guarded in some particular building, the large amount of valuable stores turned over by my command to General Thomas for the use of the government, would

undoubtedly have been scattered or destroyed. By my assuming charge of the entire city, I was the direct means of the discovery of the Confederate archives and flags. That the Confederate officers did not intend their records, etc. should fall into our hands is manifest. That purpose is shown by General Johnston's silence in reference to the same at the time of his surrender. He must have had knowledge of their location at that time, and it is further shown by the silence of Colonel Hoke, the Commandant at Charlotte, who, upon my assuming command, failed to intimate that any such important stores, etc. were in Charlotte, although talking freely of the other stores being there, and still further is it shown by the silence in reference to the same by the gentleman who entertained President Davis during his short stop at Charlotte, who also must have had knowledge of them, with whom I lunched as before mentioned, he also talking freely of the other stores, and by the remark of General Johnston, "I had hoped they might have fallen into friendly hands." All of them fully confirm the above statement, but their intention was that the archives should not fall into the possession of the government. That arrangements had been made for their disposition who can doubt? That the unexpected appearance of my small command, so far from the centre of interest (Raleigh), and the demoralization incident to Johnston's surrender, and the chaotic state of the country generally, disconcerted their plans is very evident. I never learned whether any of the records had been removed before they came into our possession, but at the time I had suspicion that such was the case, judging from the following circumstances. When the gentleman, whose name I have forgotten, living in a nearby town, who was reported as receiving stores from Char-

lotte, called on me in reference to the same, he acknowledged having received stores, and when questioned as to their nature or kind, made the statement that they were entirely private stores, and upon his assuring me he would not receive any other stores, private or public, I felt a delicacy in pressing him further as to the kind of stores, and allowed him to depart. I afterwards thought they might have been some of these records, and that it was the purpose to get them from Charlotte through this person. This, however, is only surmise.

When it is remembered that it was nearly a month after the date of the capture of these records, etc. before the last of the armies of the Confederacy surrendered to the Union arms, it is but natural they should be anxious that the records of their government should reach their friends not as yet subdued.

Viewing the result of their disposition in the light of the present time, I apprehend the Southern people are thankful they were kept from being scattered, destroyed, or lost, one of which things would certainly have happened if they had been removed from Charlotte at that time, with the country in such a tumultuous condition. I understood, at the time, that these archives, flags, etc. were sent to Washington and were stored in that noted building where the immortal Lincoln met his tragic death, the government having purchased it after that sad event.

APPENDIX.

ROSTER OF COMPANY "G" NINTH NEW JERSEY (RIFLES).

Captain, MORRIS C. RUNYAN,
1st Lieut., GEORGE L. BRYANT, 2nd Lieut., GEORGE PETERS.

SERGEANTS.

Zimmerman, Charles	Meyer, Philip	Dickey, Robert
Fatti, John H.	Zimmerman, Wm.	Eckerson, Philip
Gardner, Amos H.	Brand, Frederick.	

CORPORALS.

Garthwaite, Chas. B.	Kennedy, Daniel	Davis, Francis
Johnson, Wm. H.	Reed, David	Engle, Paul
Hill, Matthew	Sanders, Martin	Terrel, Theodore
Stubner, Theodore	Beauman, Henry	McDonald, John
Holston, John M.	Whitney, George W	

Musician, Morris Welch. *Wagoner*, Charles Ward.

PRIVATES.

Ball, Henry J.	Haulin, George	Rhubart, George
Basch, Franz	Hegel, Paul	Rien, Lorenze
Beri, Lewis	Herning, John	Riley, James
Bierman, August	Hinds, Pulaski	Ritchie, Valentine
Brander, Frederick	Johnson, John	Rogers, Albin
Braum, George	Keenan, Thomas	Rosenbauer, Frederick
Brook, Beaumont	Keinkerseht, Adolph	Rudinger, Benjamin
Burns, Adam	Kline, Jacob	Scheimer, George
Byrne, Thomas	Kerchgesner, Leopold	Schiller, Francis
Chizzola, Achille	Koch, George	Shields, Michael
Conover, Jacob	Kratz, Jacob	Smith, George (1)
Connelly, Michael	Lang, Albert	Smith, George (2)
Conrad, Lewis	Lang, John	Sonst, Philip
Corson, Joseph	Lee, Patrick	Sornet, Edwin H.
Covert, Lonces C.	Ludwig, Ludwig	Stalford, Wm. T.
Cutler, Charles	Mahoney, Stephen	Steward, Edward C.
Dalton, John	McCree, James	Stites, Amos B.

Dimler, David
Dingler, Marcus
Donnelly, Wm.
Dyer, Edward
Eckhart, Henry
Evans, Racey
Everts, Herman
Fahren, Henry
Fanorn, Henry
Ford, Thomas
Fritz, John,
Frederick, Wm.
Glaser, Jacob
Gleisner, Benjamin
Godfrey, Wm.
Graff, Peter
Hamilton, James
McCandless, David
McJohn, Edward
McMullin, James
Meir, William
Michou, Alfred
Moore, Joseph C.
Morgan, Henry
Muller, John
Murray, Samuel
Murray, John
Neuschafer, George
Newhoffer, Sebastian
Nurman, Gustav
Quinse, Frederick
Quinn, John
Raymond, John A.
Reuss, Lenipold
Sunk, Jacob
Supple, Maurice
Struble, John H.
Terrel, William
Treen, John M.
Violet, Lewis
Wall, James
Ward, William
Weisler, Andrew
Wentz, John
Williams, James H.
Wilson, Charles
Wurgler, Rudolph
Zane, Isaac B.
Zurfall, Augustus

RESIGNED.

1st Lt. W. Zimmerman
1st Lt. James Loughlin
2d Lt. John Heckman
2d Lt. J. A. Schnetzer
2d Lt. Wm. H. Benton

DISCHARGED ON ACCOUNT OF WOUNDS AND DISABILITY

Capt. JOHN P RITTER. 1st Lieut. FREDERICK HOBART.

Privates.

Ash, George
Brondsteller, Wm., Sr.
Brondsteller, Wm., Jr.
Dickert, Adam
Fitzpatrick, Thomas
Gressler, Valentine
Hand, James
Hurst, Symbinamus
Knapp, Johu
Kunkle, Michael
McBride, Patrick
Miles, William
Moran, Patrick
Porepp, Frederick
Rannard, John
Riley, Terence
Rowe, Matthew
Saland, John P.
Sanerbrunn, Jacob
Scheller, Charles
Seeger, Adam
Seidel, George
Simon, Samuel
Sponheimer, Philip
Thiele, John
Williamson, Victor

KILLED IN BATTLE AND DIED OF WOUNDS AND DISEASE.

Beck, Philip
Carrell, Capt. Ed. S.
Commeford, Patrick
Corin, John J.
Deemer, Jefferson L.
Dillon, Edward
Dolan, Michael
Frey, William
Grienich, Adam
Heck, Joseph
Huber, Christian
Lauterback, Simon
Loetz, Henry
Mulvery, Timothy
Nutt, Henry W
Ott, Henry
Peach, Frederick G.
Rang, Antony
Schmidt, Charles
Schweitzer, Philip
Sloan, Robert J.
Smith, William M.
Thompson, Thomas
Vannest, Cornelius
Waters, John J.
Welsher, John

* For full description see Vol. I., page 463, etc., "Record of Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Civil War."